

**System and Method for On-Demand Computing for
Parallel SCSI**

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Technical Field

5 The present invention relates in general to a system and method for managing the functionality of parallel Small Computer System Interface (SCSI) devices. More particularly, the present invention relates to a system and method for using SCSI commands and protocol to inherently
10 control a SCSI device's functionality.

2. Description of the Related Art

Computer technology is advancing at an exceptional rate. Hard drive capacities, bus speeds, and processor speeds are doubling every few years. In many cases, a user
15 may not require computer equipment with the latest advancement in technology. However, the user may be unsure of his future needs in which the user is faced with a decision of whether to purchase older technology computer equipment with a limited lifespan or spending more money to
20 purchase newer technology computer equipment. For example, a user may require 10 gigabytes (GB) of storage capacity when he starts a business, but may soon require 100 GB of storage when the business becomes successful. A challenge found for a user is identifying a correct amount of
25 computer equipment functionality that meets the user's current and future requirements.

Vendors offer an approach to support a user's changing functionality requirements which is termed "capacity on

demand." Using this approach, a vendor may sell or lease computer equipment to a user on a "functionality as needed" basis. A vendor provides a user with a system where a portion of the system's capability is enabled. For example, the system may include multiple processors and the user only pays for the processors he uses at the present time. In this example, the user later determines that he needs additional processors and contacts the vendor. The vendor provides a key to the user that the user enters into the system using a client console which results in client software enabling an additional processor or processors. Additional system memory may be enabled using the same protocol. The key may be distributed by a vendor to a user in various ways. For example, the user may receive a key telephonically. In another example, the user may receive an electronic key that is plugged into a special system port (i.e. USB port). In yet another example, the vendor may remotely log into the user's system and remotely enable additional resources.

A challenge found with existing "functionality as needed" approaches, however, is that functionality limitation management is enforced by higher-level system software and not within a device itself. For example, if a "functionality as needed" hard drive is moved to a different computer system and reformatted to destroy any data stored on the hard drive that identifies the hard drive or its limitation, the different computer system does not know the hard drive's allocated limitations and the entire capacity of the hard drive becomes available.

What is needed, therefore, is a system and method for managing a device's functionality level such that the functionality level is managed inherently in the device.

SUMMARY

It has been discovered that the aforementioned challenges are resolved by using a standard SCSI command to inherently manage the functionality level of a SCSI device.

5 A user's customer computing device receives a functionality value and a password from a vendor that corresponds to changing the functionality of one of the user's SCSI device. The user's customer computing device inserts the functionality value and password into a SCSI command, and

10 sends the SCSI command to the SCSI device. The SCSI device validates the password and inherently changes its functionality based upon the functionality value included in the SCSI command.

A user wishes to change the functionality of one of

15 his SCSI devices. For example, a user's SCSI device may be allocating 10 GB of a 100 GB hard drive and the user wishes to increase its allocation of the hard drive to 50 GB. The user sends a functionality request to a vendor either telephonically or by using the user's customer computing

20 device (i.e. server, personal computer, etc.). The request includes the SCSI device's serial number and may also include a functionality change amount. Using the example described above, the functionality request may include the SCSI hard drive's serial number and a request to increase

25 the SCSI device's functionality up to 50 GB.

The vendor receives the functionality request and generates an encrypted key that includes a password and a functionality value. The password is the same password that the vendor configured in the SCSI device when the

vendor provided the SCSI device to the user. The functionality value corresponds to particular functionality levels of the SCSI device. For example, a SCSI device may be a 100 GB hard drive which may be configured to allocate 10 GB, 30 GB, 50 GB, or 100 GB of storage capacity to a user. In this example, each storage capacity level has a corresponding functionality value. The encrypted key is generated using standard scrambling techniques, such as a private key/public key technique.

10 The vendor sends the key to the user's customer computing device whereby the customer computing device receives and decrypts the key. In turn, the customer computing device generates a command descriptor block using the password and functionality value included in the key.

15 The customer computing device inserts the command descriptor block into a SCSI command and sends the SCSI command to the SCSI device. The SCSI device extracts the password and functionality value whereupon, upon extraction, the SCSI device validates the password and reconfigures itself using the functionality value.

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The SCSI device sends a message to the customer computing device which includes an acknowledgement message, a password error message, or a functionality error message. An acknowledgement message signifies that the SCSI device accepted the command descriptor block and reconfigured itself using the functionality value. A password error message signifies that the password included in the command descriptor block is invalid. A functionality error message, however, signifies that the functionality value included in the command descriptor block is invalid. For example, the SCSI device may have a maximum capacity of 100

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GB and the SCSI command's functionality value corresponds to a request to increase the SCSI device's capacity to 150 GB. In this example, the SCSI device sends a functionality error message to the customer computing device indicating
5 the functionality value error.

The customer computing device forwards the SCSI device's message to the vendor who analyzes the message and bills the user for the functionality increase if the functionality increase is successful. If the functionality
10 increase is not successful, the vendor notifies personnel, such as a system administrator.

The foregoing is a summary and thus contains, by necessity, simplifications, generalizations, and omissions of detail; consequently, those skilled in the art will
15 appreciate that the summary is illustrative only and is not intended to be in any way limiting. Other aspects, inventive features, and advantages of the present invention, as defined solely by the claims, will become apparent in the non-limiting detailed description set forth
20 below.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The present invention may be better understood, and its numerous objects, features, and advantages made apparent to those skilled in the art by referencing the accompanying drawings. The use of the same reference
5 symbols in different drawings indicates similar or identical items.

Figure 1 is a diagram showing a user increasing a SCSI device's functionality using information the user received
10 from a vendor;

Figure 2 is a change definition command CDB (command descriptor block) showing various field attributes;

Figure 3 is an example of a functionality field look-up table used by a vendor during key generation;

15 **Figure 4** is a high level flow chart showing steps taken in a user requesting a key from a vendor and extracting information from the key in order to increase the functionality of a SCSI device;

Figure 5 is a flowchart showing steps taken in a
20 vendor generating a key in response to a user request;

Figure 6 is a flowchart showing steps taken in a user's customer computing device generating a command descriptor block using information included in a key which it received from a vendor;

25 **Figure 7** is a flowchart showing steps taken in a SCSI device processing a command descriptor block which was

included in a SCSI command that it received from a user's customer computing device; and

Figure 8 is a block diagram of an information handling system capable of implementing the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

The following is intended to provide a detailed description of an example of the invention and should not be taken to be limiting of the invention itself. Rather,
5 any number of variations may fall within the scope of the invention which is defined in the claims following the description.

Figure 1 is a diagram showing a user increasing a SCSI device's functionality using information the user received
10 from a vendor. User **175** wishes to increase his computing device's (e.g. customer computing device **100**) allocated functionality of SCSI device **160**. For example, SCSI device **160** may be a **100** Gigabyte (GB) hard drive which is currently configured for customer computing device **100** to
15 use 50 GB of the **100** GB storage capacity. Customer computing device **100** is a computing device which user **175** uses to access SCSI device **160** (i.e. a server, a personal computer, etc.).

Vendor **120** supports SCSI device **160** for user **175**. For
20 example, vendor **120** may be a third party storage provider which has a contract with user **175** for customer computing device **100** to use a particular amount of storage capacity included in SCSI device **160**. Customer computing device **100** sends functionality request **105** to vendor **120** through
25 computer network **110**, such as the Internet. Functionality request **105** may include SCSI device **160**'s serial number and may also include a request amount that user **175** wishes to increase SCSI device **160**'s functionality. Using the example described above, functionality request **105** may

include SCSI device **160**'s serial number and a request to increase SCSI device **160**'s functionality up to 80 GB. In one embodiment, user **175** may provide functionality request information telephonically to vendor **120**, such as
5 telephonic request **180**, through computer network **110**, such as the public switched telephone network (PSTN).

Vendor **120** receives functionality request **105** (or telephonic request **180**) and uses key generator **125** to generate a key that includes a functionality value and a
10 password which it retrieves from data store **130**. The password is the same as SCSI device **160**'s password which was previously configured by vendor **120**. For example, vendor **120** may have configured a default password in SCSI device **160** at the time that vendor **120** installed SCSI
15 device **160** for user **175**. The functionality value corresponds to particular functionality levels of SCSI device **160**. For example, SCSI device **160** may be a **100** GB hard drive whereby data store **130** includes functionality values corresponding to SCSI device **160** of 10 GB, 30 GB, 50
20 GB, 80 GB, and 100 GB (see **Figure 3** and corresponding text for further details regarding functionality values). Key generator **125** produces key **135** which is encrypted using standard scrambling techniques, such a private key/public key technique.

25 Vendor **120** sends key **135** to customer computing device **100** over computer network **110**. In one embodiment, vendor **120** provides key **135** to user **175** telephonically over computer network **110** whereby user **175** inserts key **135** into customer computing device **100**. Customer computing device
30 **100** receives and decrypts key **135**, and generates a command descriptor block using the password and functionality value

included in key **135** (see **Figures 2, 3, 6**, and corresponding text for further details regarding command descriptor block properties and generation). Customer computing device **100** includes the command descriptor block in a SCSI command and
5 sends SCSI command **155** to SCSI device **160**. SCSI device **160** validates the password included in the command descriptor block, and re-configures itself based upon the functionality value included in the command descriptor block (see **Figure 7** and corresponding text for further
10 details regarding command descriptor block analysis).

SCSI device **160** sends message **170** to customer computing device **100**. Message **170** may include an acknowledgement message, a password error message, or a functionality error message. An acknowledgement message
15 signifies that SCSI device **160** validated the password included in SCSI command **155** and reconfigured itself based upon the functionality value included in SCSI command **155**. A password error message signifies that the password included in SCSI command **155** is invalid. A functionality
20 error message signifies that the functionality value included in SCSI command **155** is invalid. For example, SCSI device **160** may have a maximum capacity of **100** GB and SCSI command **155**'s functionality value corresponds to a request to increase SCSI device **160**'s capacity to **150** GB (see
25 **Figure 7** and corresponding text for further details regarding device messages).

Customer computing device **100** forwards message **170** to vendor **120** through computer network **110**. Vendor **120** analyzes message **170**, and bills user **175** for the
30 functionality increase if the functionality increase is successful. If the functionality increase is not

successful, vendor **120** notifies personnel, such as a system administrator.

Figure 2 is a change definition command CDB (command descriptor block) showing various field attributes. A
5 customer computing device (i.e. server, personal computer, etc.) sends a SCSI command which includes a command descriptor block to a SCSI device in order to change the functionality of the SCSI device. For example, a user may wish to increase the user's customer computing device's
10 allocated capacity of a 100 GB hard drive from 40 GB up to 80 GB. In order to change a SCSI device's capacity, the user uses his customer computing device to send a request to a vendor whereupon the vendor returns a functionality value and a password (see **Figures 1, 4** through **7**, and
15 corresponding text for further details regarding customer computing device functionality requests).

Command descriptor block **200** includes ten bytes, some of which are commonly used for reasons other than this invention. Fields that are used for this invention are
20 vendor specific field **1 220** and password fields **230** through **250**. Vendor specific **1** field **220** includes a functionality value corresponding to a client's functionality request. The functionality value is five bits in size (see **Figure 3** and corresponding text for further details regarding
25 functionality values).

Password fields **230** through **250** include a vendor provided, three-byte password. A customer computing device inserts the password into command descriptor block **200**, and includes command descriptor block in a SCSI command. The
30 customer computing device sends the SCSI command to a SCSI

device whereupon, upon reception, the SCSI device validates the password included in command descriptor block **200**. If the password is valid, the SCSI device re-configures itself based upon the functionality value included in vendor specific 1 field **220**. If the password is invalid, the SCSI device sends an error message to the customer computing device (see **Figures 4** through **7** and corresponding text for further details regarding password generation and validation).

Figure 3 is an example of a functionality field look-up table used by a vendor during key generation. The vendor includes one of the functionality values in a key and sends the key to a customer computing device. In turn, the customer computing device extracts the functionality value from the key and inserts the functionality value in a command descriptor block which is included in a SCSI command and sent to a SCSI device (see **Figures 4** through **6** and corresponding text for further details regarding command descriptor block generation). The example shown in **Figure 3** corresponds to a particular storage device. As one skilled in the art can appreciate, other functionality field look-up tables may be create to support functionality levels of other devices, such as device bus speed, device media rotational speed, or optical capabilities (i.e. CDR, CDRW, DVDR, or DVDRW).

Look-up table **300** includes columns **310** and **320**. Column **310** includes a list of functionality values corresponding to particular functionality levels that are defined in column **320**. Row **350** shows that a functionality value of "00h" corresponds to no capacity change (i.e. no change in functionality). Row **355** shows that a

functionality value of "01h" requests a storage device to allocate its maximum capacity to a client. For example, if a customer computing device sends a command descriptor block to a hard drive with a functionality value of "01h" to an 800 GB hard drive, the hard drive re-configures itself to allow the customer computing device to use the entire 800 GB capacity.

Rows 360 through 385 show that a functionality value of "02h", "03h", "04h", "05h", "06h", or "07h", requests a storage device to allocate 4.5GB, 18.2GB, 36.4GB, 73.4GB, 146.8GB, or 300 GB of its capacity to a customer computing device, respectively. Row 390 shows that functionality values "08h" through "1fh" are reserved. As one skilled in the art can appreciate, different functionality levels may be assigned to particular functionality values other than what is shown in **Figure 3**.

Figure 4 is a high level flow chart showing steps taken in a user requesting a key from a vendor and extracting information from the key in order to increase the functionality of a SCSI device. User processing commences at 440, whereupon the user uses his customer computing device (i.e. a server, a personal computer, etc.) to send a request to a vendor at step 445. The request includes a request to increase the functionality of one of the user's SCSI devices. In one embodiment, the user provides functionality request information telephonically.

Vendor processing commences at 400, whereupon the vendor receives the user's request at step 402. Vendor processing generates a key in response to the request. The key includes a functionality value and a password

corresponding to the user's particular SCSI device (pre-defined process block **410**, see **Figure 5** and corresponding text for further details). After vendor processing generates the key, processing sends the key to the user's
5 customer computing device at step **412**.

The user's customer computing device receives the key at step **450**. In one example, the user receives the key telephonically whereby the user enters the key into the user's customer computing device. The user's customer
10 computing device extracts the functionality value and the password from the key, and includes them in a command descriptor block (pre-defined process block **455**, see **Figure 6** and corresponding text for further details). After the customer computing device generates the command descriptor
15 block, the customer computing device includes the command descriptor block into a SCSI command and sends the SCSI command to the user's SCSI device at step **460**.

SCSI device processing commences at **475**, whereupon the SCSI device receives the SCSI command from the customer
20 computing device at step **480**. SCSI device processing validates the password included in the command descriptor block and reconfigures itself based upon the functionality value included in the command descriptor block (pre-defined process block **485**, see **Figure 7** and corresponding text for
25 further details). SCSI device processing sends a message to the customer computing device which is an acknowledgement message, a password error message, or a functionality error message. An acknowledgement message signifies that the SCSI device accepted the command
30 descriptor block and reconfigured itself based upon the command descriptor block's functionality value. A password

error message signifies that the password included in the command descriptor block is invalid. A functionality error message signifies that the functionality value included in the command descriptor block is invalid. For example, a storage device may have a maximum capacity of 100 GB and the functionality value corresponds to a request to increase the device's capacity to 150 GB. In this example, the SCSI device sends a functionality error message to the customer computing device that indicates the functionality value discrepancy (see **Figure 7** and corresponding text for further details regarding device messages). SCSI device processing ends at **495**.

The user's customer computing device receives the SCSI device's message at step **465**, and forwards the message to the vendor. The message is forwarded to the vendor so that the vendor may charge the user for the functionality increase accordingly. For example, if the SCSI device sent an error message, the vendor should not charge the user for a functionality change.

Vendor processing receives the user's forwarded message at step **415**. A determination is made as to whether the SCSI device's functionality change was successful (decision **420**). If the SCSI device's functionality change was successful, decision **420** branches to "Yes" branch **422** whereupon processing bills the user's account located in account store **428** (step **425**). Account store **428** may be stored on a nonvolatile storage area, such as a computer hard drive. On the other hand, if the SCSI device's functionality change was not successful, decision **420** branches to "No" branch **424** whereupon processing notifies personnel, such as a system administrator (step **430**). For

example, if the SCSI device did not validate a password, a system administrator may wish to troubleshoot the vendor's password retrieval mechanism. Vendor processing ends at **435**.

5 **Figure 5** is a flowchart showing steps taken in a vendor generating a key in response to a user request. The user request includes a request for a user to increase the functionality of one of its SCSI devices. For example, the user may wish to increase its allocated capacity of one of
10 its storage devices from 10 GB up to 100 GB.

Vendor processing commences at **500**, whereupon processing looks up the user's device type in data store **520** using request information which the vendor received from the user (step **510**). Using the example described
15 above, processing looks up the storage device using a particular identifier, such as the SCSI device's serial number. Data store **520** may be stored on a nonvolatile storage area, such as a computer hard drive.

Processing retrieves a functionality value
20 corresponding to the user request at step **530**. The functionality value is retrieved from a functionality value look-up table located in data store **520** (see **Figure 3** and corresponding text for further details regarding functionality values). Using the example described above,
25 a user sent a request to a vendor requesting to increase the user's allocated capacity for its storage device to 100 GB and, therefore, vendor processing looks up a functionality value corresponding to 100 GB. Processing retrieves a password from data store **520** corresponding to
30 the user's SCSI device at step **540**. For example, a vendor

may have configured a default password into the user's SCSI device at a time when the vendor installed the user's SCSI device.

Processing generates key **125** which includes the
5 functionality value and the password at step **560**. Key **125** is the same key that is shown in **Figure 1**. Key **125** may be encrypted using various scrambling approaches, such as an exclusive-OR method or public key/private key. Vendor processing returns at **570**.

10 **Figure 6** is a flowchart showing steps taken in a user's customer computing device generating a command descriptor block using information included in a key which it received from a vendor. User processing commences at **600**, whereupon the user's customer computing device's
15 operating system initiates an enabling process (step **610**). The enabling process enables a SCSI device to report more capacity to a customer computing device because the operating system changes a SCSI device's defined capacity level within the customer computing device. Processing
20 initiates a command descriptor block, such as command descriptor block **655**, at step **620**. Command descriptor block **655** is a command descriptor block that is included in SCSI command **155** which is shown in **Figure 1**. Command descriptor block **655** includes various field attributes and
25 is used to communicate with a SCSI device (see **Figure 2** and corresponding text for further details regarding command descriptor block properties).

Processing retrieves a key from key store **635** at step **630**. The key was sent from a vendor and includes a
30 functionality value and a password. (see **Figure 5** and

corresponding text for further details regarding vendor key generation steps). Processing decrypts the key using standard decryption techniques (i.e. public key/private key) and extracts the functionality value and password at
5 step **640**. The functionality value and the password correspond to a particular SCSI device which the user wishes to reconfigure. Processing inserts the functionality value into command descriptor block **655**'s functionality field at step **650**. The functionality field
10 is a five-bit location included in a command descriptor block (see **Figures 2, 3**, and corresponding text for further details regarding functionality field properties). Processing inserts the extracted password into a three-byte area that is included in command descriptor block **655** at
15 step **660** (see **Figure 2** and corresponding text for further details regarding password properties). Processing returns at **670**.

Figure 7 is a flowchart showing steps taken in a SCSI device processing a command descriptor block which was
20 included in a SCSI command that it received from a user's customer computing device. SCSI device processing commences at **700**, whereupon processing extracts a password from command descriptor block **655** (step **710**). Command descriptor block **655** is the same command descriptor block
25 that is shown in **Figure 6**. The password is up to three bytes in length and corresponds to the particular SCSI device (see **Figures 2, 3**, and corresponding text for further details regarding password properties).

A determination is made as to whether the password is
30 valid (decision **715**). For example, processing may match the extracted password with a pre-defined password that was

originally set by the SCSI device's vendor at time of manufacturing. If the extracted password is not valid, decision **715** branches to "No" branch **717** whereupon processing generates an error message at step **720**, and
5 processing returns at **725**. On the other hand, if the extracted password is valid, decision **715** branches to "Yes" branch **719** whereupon processing identifies the SCSI device's maximum functionality at step **730**. For example, if the device is a storage device, processing identifies
10 the device's maximum storage capacity, such as 100 GB.

Processing extracts a functionality value from command descriptor block **655** at step **735**. The functionality value corresponds to a new functionality level that is requested by user's customer computing device. A determination is
15 made as to whether the functionality request is valid by comparing the SCSI device's maximum functionality with the extracted functionality value (decision **740**). For example, if a storage device's maximum capacity is 100 GB and the functionality value corresponds to 150 GB, the request is
20 not valid. If the request is not valid, decision **740** branches to "No" branch **742** whereupon processing generates a functionality error message at step **745**, and processing returns at **750**. On the other hand, if the request is valid, decision **740** branches to "Yes" branch **744** whereupon
25 processing configures the SCSI device corresponding to the new functionality value (step **760**). For example, if the functionality value corresponds to 80 GB, processing configures a storage device to allocate 80 GB to a user's customer computing device.

Processing generates an acknowledgement message at step 770 which indicates that the SCSI device accepted the functionality change, and processing returns at step 780.

Figure 8 illustrates information handling system **801** which is a simplified example of a computer system capable of performing the computing operations described herein. Computer system **801** includes processor **800** which is coupled to host bus **802**. A level two (L2) cache memory **804** is also coupled to host bus **802**. Host-to-PCI bridge **806** is coupled to main memory **808**, includes cache memory and main memory control functions, and provides bus control to handle transfers among PCI bus **810**, processor **800**, L2 cache **804**, main memory **808**, and host bus **802**. Main memory **808** is coupled to Host-to-PCI bridge **806** as well as host bus **802**. Devices used solely by host processor(s) **800**, such as LAN card **830**, are coupled to PCI bus **810**. Service Processor Interface and ISA Access Pass-through **812** provides an interface between PCI bus **810** and PCI bus **814**. In this manner, PCI bus **814** is insulated from PCI bus **810**. Devices, such as flash memory **818**, are coupled to PCI bus **814**. In one implementation, flash memory **818** includes BIOS code that incorporates the necessary processor executable code for a variety of low-level system functions and system boot functions.

PCI bus **814** provides an interface for a variety of devices that are shared by host processor(s) **800** and Service Processor **816** including, for example, flash memory **818**. PCI-to-ISA bridge **835** provides bus control to handle transfers between PCI bus **814** and ISA bus **840**, universal serial bus (USB) functionality **845**, power management functionality **855**, and can include other functional

elements not shown, such as a real-time clock (RTC), DMA control, interrupt support, and system management bus support. Nonvolatile RAM **820** is attached to ISA Bus **840**. PCI-to-SCSI bridge **880** provides bus control to handle
5 transfers between PCI bus **814** and SCSI bus **885**. SCSI device **890** (i.e. a SCSI hard drive) communicates with other parts of computer system **801** using SCSI bus **885**.

Service Processor **816** includes JTAG and I2C busses **822** for communication with processor(s) **800** during
10 initialization steps. JTAG/I2C busses **822** are also coupled to L2 cache **804**, Host-to-PCI bridge **806**, and main memory **808** providing a communications path between the processor, the Service Processor, the L2 cache, the Host-to-PCI bridge, and the main memory. Service Processor **816** also
15 has access to system power resources for powering down information handling device **801**.

Peripheral devices and input/output (I/O) devices can be attached to various interfaces (e.g., parallel interface **862**, serial interface **864**, keyboard interface **868**, and
20 mouse interface **870** coupled to ISA bus **840**. Alternatively, many I/O devices can be accommodated by a super I/O controller (not shown) attached to ISA bus **840**.

In order to attach computer system **801** to another computer system to copy files over a network, LAN card **830**
25 is coupled to PCI bus **810**. Similarly, to connect computer system **801** to an ISP to connect to the Internet using a telephone line connection, modem **875** is connected to serial port **864** and PCI-to-ISA Bridge **835**.

While the computer system described in **Figure 8** is
30 capable of executing the processes described herein, this

computer system is simply one example of a computer system. Those skilled in the art will appreciate that many other computer system designs are capable of performing the processes described herein.

5 One of the preferred implementations of the invention is an application, namely, a set of instructions (program code) in a code module which may, for example, be resident in the random access memory of the computer. Until required by the computer, the set of instructions may be
10 stored in another computer memory, for example, on a hard disk drive, or in removable storage such as an optical disk (for eventual use in a CD ROM) or floppy disk (for eventual use in a floppy disk drive), or downloaded via the Internet or other computer network. Thus, the present invention may
15 be implemented as a computer program product for use in a computer. In addition, although the various methods described are conveniently implemented in a general purpose computer selectively activated or reconfigured by software, one of ordinary skill in the art would also recognize that
20 such methods may be carried out in hardware, in firmware, or in more specialized apparatus constructed to perform the required method steps.

While particular embodiments of the present invention have been shown and described, it will be obvious to those
25 skilled in the art that, based upon the teachings herein, changes and modifications may be made without departing from this invention and its broader aspects and, therefore, the appended claims are to encompass within their scope all such changes and modifications as are within the true
30 spirit and scope of this invention. Furthermore, it is to

be understood that the invention is solely defined by the appended claims. It will be understood by those with skill in the art that if a specific number of an introduced claim element is intended, such intent will be explicitly recited
5 in the claim, and in the absence of such recitation no such limitation is present. For a non-limiting example, as an aid to understanding, the following appended claims contain usage of the introductory phrases "at least one" and "one or more" to introduce claim elements. However, the use of
10 such phrases should not be construed to imply that the introduction of a claim element by the indefinite articles "a" or "an" limits any particular claim containing such introduced claim element to inventions containing only one such element, even when the same claim includes the
15 introductory phrases "one or more" or "at least one" and indefinite articles such as "a" or "an"; the same holds true for the use in the claims of definite articles.